

DEALING WITH STRESS

Tips for Staying Cool

Driving with stress is driving with risk. Anytime you are under stress, you are less than fully aware of what is going on around you. Mentally, you are overloaded and your good judgment and quick reactions are not at their best.

Because you are subject to almost constant stress of some sort when you are on the road, learning to manage stress is important. Reacting with anger to irritating situations is not an answer when you are behind the wheel. You have to keep control of your emotions and maintain your professionalism.

Relaxation Techniques

Here are a few simple ways to deal with tension:

- **Exercise.** A little physical activity goes far in relaxing you. If you can, stop your vehicle, get out and walk around a little. Get your mind off the tensions by checking vehicle. Try to do some bending and stretching to loosen up your muscles.
- **Breathing.** You can do this at the wheel. Take deep and regular breaths. Inhale through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth. Keep doing this for a few minutes until you feel relaxed.

Know Yourself

The better you know yourself, the better you will know how you are likely to react under a given set of conditions. If you know you are

prone to anger when something irritates you, find a way to give yourself a longer fuse. Learn where you have to compensate for shortcomings within yourself.



If possible, avoid situations where you are most likely to lose your temper. If someone is bugging you, focus on your own worth as a person. The words will have less impact on you. You will simply hear

them for what they are worth and not take them personally.

It helps to understand your own emotional makeup. This makes it a lot easier to deal with frustrating situations and people.

Pull Off the Road

If you are behind the wheel and something happens that infuriates you, pull off the road and take a break. If you need to, get out and take a walk while you let go of some steam in a safe environment. Give yourself time to cool off before you drive again.

Whatever you do, do not try and “get” another person. Just because someone else did something foolish, it is no reason to put yourself at risk—or to do the same to other drivers, your vehicle and its passengers.

As a professional, you have to rise above the situation and deal with it rationally. Drive smart, keep your cool and stay safe.